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Downham Rural District.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE

YEAR 1947.

DR. C. T. DARWENT, L.R.C.P., L.R.C.S., D.P.H.

ARTHUR WATSON PRINTER DOWNHAM MKT.

Downham Rural District Council.

Members of the Public Health Committee.

Chairman—Major J. H. L. Luddington

Mr. W. Addison,	Mr. H. Gates,
„ E. Barker,	Col. E. R. Herbert,
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„ R. A. Clayton,	Mr. M. Stocks,
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„ A. Dye	„ G. G. Wright.

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council are ex-officio members of the Committee.

Public Health Officers of the Local Authority.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

Dr. C. T. Darwent, L.R.C.P., L.R.C.S., D.P.H.

Also holds the appointments of:—

Asst. County Medical Officer of Health.

Asst. County School Medical Officer.

Medical Officer of Health to Marshland Rural District.

Medical Officer of Health to Downham Urban District.

SANITARY INSPECTOR.

H. W. Nowell, Assoc. M.C.T., M.S.I.A.

CLERK TO THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

K. Saint.

STOKE FERRY,

June, 1948.

To the Chairman and Members of the Rural District Council of Downham

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present for your consideration the annual report of the health and sanitary circumstances of the district for the year ending the 31st December, 1947.

The report is drawn up on the lines suggested in the various circulars issued by the Ministry of Health.

The vital statistics for the year under review, may be regarded as satisfactory. The births show an increase (35) as compared with 1946, but this is counter-balanced by an increased number of deaths (41).

The number of cases of Measles notified during the year, is I think the highest on record for the district, but the same may be said of the County as a whole. There were, however, no deaths assigned to this cause. The incidence of the other zymotic diseases continues at a low level.

During March, serious flooding occurred involving a large part of the Hilgay and Southery Fen area.

The houses in this area were evacuated, and approximately 100 families had to seek alternative accommodation.

Many found homes with relatives and friends and 57 families (244 persons) were temporarily housed by the Council in Nissen huts on the disused aerodromes at Bexwell and Methwold.

In the sphere of applied sanitation many problems call for solution, which for the present must be shelved until the financial recovery of the Country has been established.

The number of children under 15 years of age who have been immunised against Diphtheria, compares very favourably with the other Rural Districts of the County.

I wish to acknowledge with thanks the assistance afforded me by the officers of my department.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient Servant,

C. T. DARWENT,

Medical Officer of Health.

SUMMARY OF VITAL STATISTICS, 1947.

Area (in acres)	...	...	...	...	...	...	124,152
Population 1931 Census	...	15,503	...	...	1947...	...	19,990
Number of separate dwellings occupied 1947	...	...	...	...	...	...	6,699
Rateable value, 1947	...	...	...	...	...	...	£18,239
Product of a penny rate, 1947	...	...	...	...	...	...	£252 9 11

LIVE BIRTHS.

	Total	Male	Female	Downham Rural Dist	Rate England & Wales	Administrative County
Legitimate	407	205	202			
Illegitimate	28	14	14			
	435	219	216	21.7	20.5	20.84

STILL-BIRTHS (Rate per 1000 (Live and Still Births).

	Total	Male	Female	D.R.D.	Rate	Ad. County
Legitimate	13	9	4			
Illegitimate	Nil	—	—			
	13	9	4	29.6		18.9

DEATHS (all causes)

	Total	Male	Female	D.R.D.	Rate E. & W.	Ad. County
	267	148	119	13.4	12.0	12.7

DEATHS from Puerperal Causes.

Puerperal and post-Abortive Sepsis	...	...	...	Nil.
Other puerperal causes	...	...	...	Nil.

INFANT MORTALITY (rate per 1000 live births).

				D.R.D.	Rate E. & W.	Ad. County
				45.9	41	36.39
Legitimate	17 (per 1,000 Legit. Live Births)			41.7		
Illegitimate	3 „ „ Illegit. „ „			107	—	
Total	20					

DEATHS FROM

Cancer	(all ages)	...	...	...	...	28
Measles	„	...	...	...	...	Nil.
Whooping Cough	„	...	...	...	...	Nil.
Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age	2

SECTION A.

Natural and Social Conditions.

Area (acres)	124,152
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Population	The estimated mid-year population of the district (Registrar General figures)						19,990
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DEATHS	The total number of deaths assigned to the district by the Registrar General after adjustment for inward and outward transfers, was 267, compared with 266 for 1946. The recorded death rate is equivalent to 13.4					
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of the civilian population, as compared with 12.0 for England and Wales

BIRTHS. The number of live births assigned to the district was 435, compared with 400 in 1946. The birth rate is increased, and is equal to 21.7 per 1000 of the population.

MATERNAL MORTALITY. It is satisfactory to note that there were no Maternal deaths.

STILL BIRTHS. The number of still-births registered was 13 as compared with 12 for 1946. This gives a rate of 29.6 per 1,000 total (live and still) births.

INFANT MORTALITY. Twenty (17 legitimate and 3 illegitimate) infants under 1-year of age died during 1947.

Deaths under 1-year per 1000 live births.

Downham Rural District	...	45.9
England and Wales	...	41.0
Administrative County	...	36.39

NEONATAL MORTALITY. Infants who died within 28 days of independent existence are classified as Neonatal deaths and as such are included in the Infant Mortality Rate.

SECTION B.

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES.

LABORATORY FACILITIES.

Emergency samples of water and food for bacteriological examination are sent to the Emergency Public Health Laboratory, Norwich.

The Public Analyst is W. Lincoln Sutton, Esq., F.R.I.C., Norwich.

DIPHTHERIA ANTITOXIN.

A supply of Antitoxin in accordance with the provisions of the Diphtheria (outside London) Order, 1910, is available free of charge to Medical Practitioners for use in the District from Messrs Smith & Wesley, Chemists, Downham Market

AMBULANCE FACILITIES.

Non-Infectious and accident cases are removed by the British Red Cross Ambulance Brigade stationed in Downham Market. The total number of cases dealt with by the British Red Cross Society's Ambulance was 228 for the year 1947.

Cases of Infectious Diseases are removed by the Ambulance from East Dereham Isolation Hospital.

HOSPITAL

The three main Hospitals serving the area are :—

- (a) The West Norfolk and King's Lynn General Hospital.
- (b) The Downham Public Assistance Institution.
- (c) Addenbrooks Hospital, Cambridge.

HOSPITAL ACCOMMODATION FOR INFECTIOUS DISEASES:—

This is provided by the East Dereham Isolation Hospital under the authority of the Norfolk County Health Authority.

EMERGENCY MATERNITY HOSPITAL at Stow Bardolph under the Norfolk County Health Authority.

SECTION C.

Sanitary Circumstances of the District.

WATER SUPPLY.

The Water supply of the Rural District is obtained from three sources :—

- (1) The Northern area is supplied by mains from the Wisbech Water Company's Works, Marham.
- (2) The Central and South Eastern area by mains from the Council's pumping station at Feltwell.
- (3) The South Western Area is supplied from a main belonging to the Ely Rural District Council, water being pumped into a Water Tower at Welney.

The Council's Consulting Engineers have drawn up a scheme for the extension of mains throughout the Council's area, which has been submitted to the Ministry of Health for approval.

BACTERIOLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF WATER.

The quality of the Council's mains supply from Denton Lodge Pumping Station at Feltwell must be assumed to be satisfactory—as no adverse report from the Water Engineer has ever been submitted to the Health Department.

The Council's well at Denton Lodge, Feltwell is a deep one, and as such, especially after periods of drought, may easily be contaminated from a far distant source, through fissures occurring in the various water-bearing strata. In the past, samples of the raw water for Bacteriological Examination from this source have been taken at far too infrequent intervals. To meet with any contingency that may arise and also to comply with the Ministry's suggestions, I have recommended that in future, samples of the raw water for Bacteriological Examination be taken monthly or more often should the occasion arise, and copies of the result of such examinations be filed in the Health Department's Office.

Officers of the Health Department have submitted samples of water from the undermentioned sources for bacteriological examination to the Emergency Public Health Laboratory, Bowthorpe Road, Norwich.

	Source	Number of Samples Taken		Results		
Parish	Public	Wells Private	Mains	Good	Suspicious	Bad
Barton Bendish	—	1	—	—	—	1
Boughton	—	2	—	—	—	2
Denver	—	1	—	1	—	—
Fincham	—	2	—	1	—	1
Northwold	—	1	—	—	—	1
Runcton Holme	—	2	—	—	—	2
Stow Bardolph	—	1	—	—	—	1
Shouldham Thorpe	—	1	—	—	—	1
Tottenhill	1	1	—	1	—	1
Wereham	—	1	—	—	—	1
West Dereham	—	2	—	—	—	2
Wiggenhall-St Marys	—	1	—	—	—	1
	1	16		3	—	14

SEWAGE DISPOSAL.

The Council operates a mechanical cesspool emptier for the emptying of private cesspools and this machine is also used for weekly collection of pail closet contents in the Parishes of Fincham, Downham West, Hilgay (including Ten Mile Bank) and Denver.

During the year the Council took over from the Air Ministry, two modern sewage disposal plants on the Bexwell Aerodrome site. These are in use for treatment of sewage from the converted dwellings on the aerodrome and also for the treatment of cesspool and pail closet contents collected by the cesspool emptier.

CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

Closet accommodation in your district is approximately :—

20% Water Closets

30% Privies

50% Pails

Many of the Privy Closets are insanitary, and require conversion to pails or water closets.

REFUSE COLLECTION and DISPOSAL

The Council operates a refuse collection vehicle which visits all parishes once monthly.

The present system of refuse disposal leaves much to be desired and a reduction in the number of Dumps and improved methods of control are desirable

DISINFECTION.

In all cases of Diphtheria and Scarlet Fever, disinfection of the house was carried out immediately after the removal of the patient to Hospital, or after the recovery of a patient isolated at home.

Disinfections were also carried out after death, or removal of patients suffering from Phthisis. The disinfectant used was formaldehyde.

ERADICATION OF BED BUGS.

No case of infestation by bed bugs was discovered.

MOVEABLE DWELLINGS.

There is one Licensed camping site in the area, but this was not in use during the year.

One License was granted during the year for the temporary use of a site for moveable dwellings.

RATS AND MICE DESTRUCTION ACT, 1919, INFESTATION ORDER, 1943.

All complaints of rat and mice infestation were promptly dealt with. In localities where complaints were numerous, surveys were made and block control methods adopted. The Council's refuse tips received attention, as and when necessary. The Council do not employ a rodent operative, and the work is carried out by the Pests Department of the Norfolk Agricultural Executive Committee.

SECTION D.

Housing.

A complete survey of all the houses in the Rural District is in progress. During the year, three parishes were surveyed, totalling 651 houses. The survey has now covered 10 parishes totalling 2,048 houses.

Official representations as to the unfitness of six houses were made to the Council during the year and the procedure for making closing or demolition orders in these cases is being carried out. The present severe shortage of housing accommodation in this district is holding up action under the Housing Acts in respect of unfit property, although such action is very necessary in many cases.

SECTION E.

Inspection and Supervision of Food.

MILK SUPPLY.

There are 284 cowkeepers and retail dairymen on the register. Five new registrations were made during the year.

Numerous complaints were received from the Feltwell area of the early souring of milk. On investigation it was found that the bulk of this milk was brought in by a retailer from the area of another Local Authority, and that the milk was from a bulk supply from the Milk Marketing Board's Depot at Norwich. Correspondence followed with the adjoining Local Authority and also with the Milk Marketing Board.

The trouble appeared to be due to the length of time elapsing between production of the milk and delivery to the consumer. However, following this correspondence there did appear to be an im-

provement in the keeping quality of the milk delivered in this area.

Generally speaking the keeping quality of the milk supplied in the Council's area appeared to be fairly satisfactory.

MEAT AND FOOD INSPECTION.

The Slaughterhouses in the area were not in use this year as the slaughtering of livestock continued to be carried out at King's Lynn under the Ministry of Food's centralised Slaughtering Scheme.

Inspections of food at retail shops and canteens resulted in 15 cwts. 21½ lbs. of various foods, in addition to 334 tins of food, being condemned as unfit for human consumption.

SECTION F.

Prevalence of, and Control over, Infectious and other Diseases

SMALL POX. Nil.

SCARLET FEVER. Eighteen cases were notified during the year.

DIPHTHERIA.

It is gratifying to report that for another year NO cases of Diphtheria was notified.

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION.

In order that the freedom from Diphtheria in the district be maintained, it is essential that the good work in the past in this field of protection be maintained by the medical profession in the district, and also by the co-operation of all parents to secure free immunisation for their children.

This is carried out chiefly by the Medical Practitioners of the district either at the home, the surgery or at the school.

Number of children immunised during 1947.

0—5-years, 193.

5—15 years, 73.

PUERPERAL PYREXIA. No cases were notified.

PNEUMONIA.

Thirteen cases were notified, six of which were in children. There were eleven deaths.

ERYSIPELAS.

Six cases were notified, all in persons over 25 years of age.

CEREBRO-SPINAL FEVER. Nil.

MEASLES.

214 cases were notified during the year. This is the highest number ever recorded in the district. The cases were fairly evenly distributed throughout the various 33 parishes and the peak age was 5 years, at which 107 cases occurred. NO deaths have been assigned to this disease.

WHOOPING COUGH.

Sixty-six cases were notified during the year. There were NO deaths from this cause.

CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS.

No schools were elosed.

Under the Elementary Education Provisional Code, 1922, Article 57, which is as follows :— “ If the Sanitary Authority of the district in which the school is situated, or any two members thereof, acting on the advice of the Medical Officer of Health, require either the closure of the school or any department thereof, or the excluding of certain children for a specified time, with a view to preventing the spread of disease or any danger to health likely to arise from the condition of the school, such requirement must at once be complied with.”

FOOD POISONING.

On the 17th May. 1947, an explosive outbreak of food poisoning occurred at Ten Mile Bank and Black Horse Drove, Littleport. All five members of the household at Ten Mile Bank were taken suddenly ill after eating Liver Sausage—commercially known as “Haslet.” The symptoms were somewhat alarming—severe sickness with diarrhoea—severe headache, swelling of the lips and of the lower limbs. Three members of the family at Black Horse Drove had also partaken of “Haslet,” and suffered severe vomiting and diarrhoea, but no swelling of face or limbs.

The suspected agent was submitted to Dr. MacDonald of the E.P.H. Laboratory, Norwich, for examination. He reported that both samples were heavily affected with Staphylococcus Aureus. All the patients after 3 to 4 days prostration, made an uneventful recovery.

TUBERCULOSIS

Twelve cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis (seven males and five females), and five cases of Non-Pulmonary (one male and four females) were notified during 1947. There were six deaths. Five died from Pulmonary infection and one from Non-Pulmonary Tuberculosis.

Year	New Cases of Tuberculosis – all forms			Rate per 1,000 of Population	
	Male	Female	Total	Downham Rural District	County
1947	8	9	17	0.85	0.33

SECTION G.
STATISTICAL TABLES. 1947.
CAUSES OF DEATH.

Table No. 1.

Causes of Death.					Total.	Male.	Female.
1.	Typhoid and paratyphoid fevers	...	...	...	Nil	—	—
2.	Cerebro spinal fever	...	...	...	Nil	—	—
3.	Scarlet fever	...	...	...	Nil	—	—
4.	Whooping cough	...	...	...	Nil	—	—
5.	Diphtheria	...	...	...	Nil	—	—
6.	Tuberculosis of respiratory system	...	...	...	5	2	3
7.	Other forms of tuberculosis	...	...	...	1	—	1
8.	Syphilitic diseases	...	...	...	—	—	—
9.	Influenza	...	...	...	2	1	1
10.	Measles	...	...	...	Nil	—	—
11.	Acute polio-myelitis and polio encephalitis	...	...	...	Nil	—	—
12.	Acute infective encephalitis	...	...	...	Nil	—	—
13.	Cancer of the buccal cavity & oesophagus(m)	...	...	...	1	—	1
	uterus (f)	...	...	...	—	—	—
14.	Cancer of stomach and duodenum	...	...	...	7	4	3
15.	Cancer of breast	...	...	...	6	—	6
16.	Cancer of all other sites	...	...	...	14	9	5
17.	Diabetes	...	...	...	1	1	—
18.	Intra-cranial vascular lesions	...	...	...	40	21	19
19.	Heart disease	...	...	...	93	48	45
20.	Other diseases of circulatory system	...	...	...	8	5	3
21.	Bronchitis	...	...	...	11	7	4
22.	Pneumonia	...	...	...	11	8	3
23.	Other respiratory diseases	...	...	...	4	1	3
24.	Ulcer of stomach or duodenum	...	...	...	1	1	—
25.	Diarrhoea under 2-years	...	...	...	2	2	—
26.	Appendicitis	...	...	...	Nil	—	—
27.	Other digestive diseases	...	...	...	7	3	4
28.	Nephritis	...	...	...	3	2	1
29.	Puerperal and post abortive sepsis	...	...	...	Nil	—	—
30.	Other maternal causes	...	...	...	Nil	—	—
31.	Premature birth	...	...	...	8	4	4
32.	Congenital malformations, birth injury and infantile diseases	...	...	...	4	2	2
33.	Suicide	...	...	...	5	4	1
34.	Road traffic accidents	...	...	...	1	1	—
35.	Other violent causes	...	...	...	5	3	2
36.	All other causes	...	...	...	27	19	8
	All causes	...	...	...	267	148	119

SECTION H.

Table No. 2.

Causes of Death of Children under One Year, 1947.

CAUSES OF DEATH.

	Age in Weeks.					Total
	-1	-2	-3	-4	5-52	
I. Congenital Malformations						
II. Diseases of Early Infancy						
(a) Congenital Debility	1	2				3
(b) Premature Birth	5		1			6
(c) Injury at Birth	1					1
(d) Atelectasis	2					2
(e) Others						
III. Diseases of Respiratory System		1		3	2	6
IV. Diseases of Nervous System						
V. Diseases of Digestive System					2	2
VI. Tuberculosis Disease						
VII. Infectious Disease						
VIII. Syphilis						
IX. Overlaying						
X. Violence						
XI. All other causes						
	9	3	1	3	4	20

Table No. 3.

New Cases of and Deaths from Tuberculosis, 1947.

NEW CASES.

DEATHS.

Age in Years	Respiratory		Non-Respiratory		Respiratory		Non-Respiratory	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
-1								
-5			1	3				1
-15	3	2						
-25	2	2				1		
-35				1		1		
-45	1					1		
-55		1						
-65	1				1			
65+					1			
Totals	7	5	1	4	2	3		1

TABLE NO. 4.

NOTIFIABLE INFECTIOUS DISEASES.
NOTIFICATION IN AGE GROUPS.

DISEASE.	Under 1 year												Total Hospital Deaths
	1—	2—	3—	4—	5—	10—	15—	20—	35—	45—	65— and over	Total	
Scarlet Fever	—	1	1	1	6	3	2	2	1	—	—	18	—
Diphtheria	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Measles	4	14	21	15	14	107	26	6	7	—	—	214	—
Whooping Cough	4	5	7	8	11	27	4	—	—	—	—	66	—
Erysipelas	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	5	—	6	—
Pneumonia	1	—	—	2	2	—	3	1	2	2	—	13	6
Puerperal Pyrexia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	2	—
Enteric Fever	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	*1	—	—	—	1	—
Infective Jaundice	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1	—
Acute Polio-Myelitis	—	—	—	—	—	—	*1	—	—	—	—	1	—
Total												322	

* Non-Civilian.

TABLE NO. 5.

MONTHLY INCIDENT OF NOTIFIABLE DISEASES, 1947. (Other than Tuberculosis).

DISEASE	Jan- uary	Feb- ruary	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept- ember	October	Nov- ember	Dec- ember	Total
Scarlet Fever	—	2	5	1	3	—	3	—	—	—	1	3	18
Measles	2	5	3	6	35	49	48	26	2	2	6	30	214
Whooping Cough	—	3	7	10	8	3	6	20	6	2	—	1	66
Pneumonia	—	2	4	2	1	—	—	1	—	—	1	2	13
Erysipelas	—	—	2	1	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	6
Puerperal Pyrexia	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—	2
Enteric Fever	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	*1	—	—	1
Infective Jaundice	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	1
Acute Polio-Myelitis	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	*1	—	—	—	—	1
Totals	2	12	21	20	48	52	58	49	8	6	9	37	322

* Non-Civilian.

